

## Soil Types

The particle size of a soil defines its classification and characteristics.

The different soil types are:

- **Clay:** less than 0.002mm
- **Silt:** 0.002-0.05mm
- **Sand:** 0.05-2mm
- **Stones:** bigger than 2mm in size



**Clay soils** are rich in nutrients and hold moisture. They are wet and cold in winter and crack and dry in summer. If handled when wet, clods rather than a crumb structure will be formed making seed germination and plant establishment poor

**Sandy soils** are light, dry, warm, low in nutrients and free draining. Without a proportion of clay, silt and organic matter they will not alone support good growth.

**Silt soils** are fertile and hold moisture. Silt is easily compacted because of its fine particle size. Silt is also prone to water and wind erosion if left exposed to the elements without plant cover.

**Loam** This is simply a term used for a mixture of clay, sand and silt. Loams can give a perfect balance of all soil particle types.

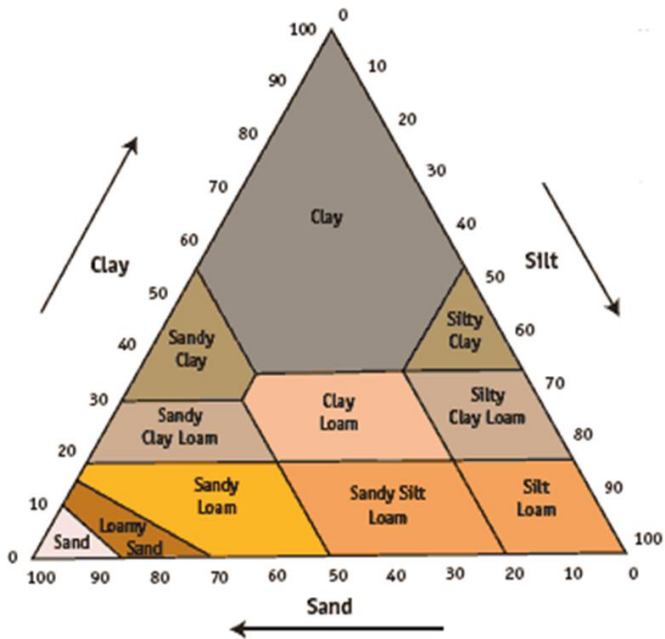


A clay soil handled when wet will form into clods



Soils handled in the right conditions will breakdown into a fine crumb structure which is ideal for planting

The soil triangle is used to classify a soil type



## ORGANIC MATTER

Soil organic matter consists of a wide range of organic substances that are generally beneficial to the soil. The positive effects of soil organic matter can largely be seen by its retention and gradual supply of nutrients to plants.

Soils that are well supplied in organic matter are less susceptible to drought during the summer months.

